

Can we eradicate prisons?

Paradoxically, as a prisoner, I am a firm believer in the reformation of prisons and prisoners.

I also believe that prisons can be a secondary option in punishment and not the ultimate solution to all of our problems.

We have what it takes to tear more prisons down and to stop the continuing construction of prisons.

I understand that a complete eradication of prisons is unrealistic and unreasonable, and irrational at best.

However, history had proved that humans can be defied to overcome the impossible, to achieve the unthinkable and to conquer through colossal achievements.

As a society - We must ask ourselves:
Are we willing to help those inside?

Why should we do so?

Albert Einstein once said:

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

The problem is not prison itself - for those who refuse to do good and keep doing bad, for those who are real threats to the public safety, must be lock up.

It is undisputable that prisons must exist for those who have zero disregard to another human life.

The problem is how prisons are used for the sake of profits and power; and not truly rehabilitating an offender.

It is also weaponized to target minorities systematically and to politicizing prisons.

Prisons are used for political rhetoric to meet an agenda, a political agenda that will not benefit communities at all.

Prisons - is just sweeping the dirt under the rug, Prisons - is just ignoring the problem and not treating the root of the ... problem, it is just the easy way

to treat the symptoms and not diagnosing the real problem of a disease.

An offender is punished for the crime he or she have committed. however, the government is subjecting this offender under continuing punishment.

Decades can pass ... without committing another crime, yet we will always be seeing as offenders, even though we (some of us) have truly reformed ourselves and we are educated individuals, we have hold ourselves accountable for what we did, but we have renewed our minds and we are living as redeemed and rehabilitated persons.

But the government insist in punishing us for a crime we committed decades ago, and this punishment can be disproportionate to the offense.

The government's ideology is that all of us, we are unredeemable and therefore we must be punished continuously.

I have embraced my reality of a former offender living in a prison under dehumanizing conditions.

And this is something that every rehabilitated person must embrace.

You have work to do and is a work of progress, where you are continually evolving, shedding dead myths and wrong thinking off your mind.

So you don't see yourself, as the offender they hung on a trial in a "Court of Law."

I was literally a kid when they judged me and locked me up in a cell, throwing the key away. Since then, I've been working constantly to prove myself - That I made horrible mistakes lead me to commit a heinous crime but I am renewing my mind so I don't make the same mistakes.

As former offenders, we have to work hard to become better humans but the truth is that we are punished continuously by an offense that was perpetrated decades ago.

In my case I've been punished with Isolation Confinement for over a decade.

Solitary Confinement and Administrative confinement such as Special Management Units in Arizona State Prisons, are the hub for the degradation of the human spirit, the slowly mutilation of your soul and the softly killing of your mind.

Like the venom of a poisonous desert spider, a dark substance, infiltrating your blood cells, traveling throughout your circulatory system - aiming at your heart to shut it down.
A systemic attack to the human's spirit.

This is the way I see it, these are the lens on which I see this world in which I have evolved through hardship, pain, battles and above all - Love from mom and friends.

Living in an american prison while leaving my past behind and focusing on the goal that is ahead of me, and not living as a convict, nor as an inmate or prisoner, but as a redeemed person who's seeking for healing, is exhaustive bussines.

I've been locked up in a cell for over a decade, spending 90% of this time on lock down - 21-23 hours a day some days 24 hours straight, sharing a tiny space with another person.

For seven years, I was not allowed to go outdoors, as a result of this policy, the sun never touch my skin. I used to joked with mom, that now I was like Micheal Jackson, (referring that I am a dark skin person, but then I was pale) she would laugh heartily.

To lock me up in a cell, under this conditions, for over a decade, your policy, not only caused me so much damage to my cognitive health, but you also, violated a most fundamental right - My right to be Freed from torture.

The U.N. had ruled, decades ago, that locking up a prisoner in a cell for over 15 days, it is considered torture, yet in the U.S. there's a keen tendency of locking you up in rusty cages for decades to come.

Reading at my journals that I have piled up for the past four years, I've recognized that it has been a psychological tug-of-war. Internal battles that have been going on and off throughout my incarceration.

Sometimes when I'm skimming my personal journals, I often read about situations where I am dealing with paranoia, mistrust, confusion, fears, doubts, resentment, and the list goes on. These internal struggles were disrupting my peace of mind, to the point of feeling desperation and not knowing what to do, uncertainty is a killer.

One morning sitting on my bunk in almost solitary confinement I wrote the following on my journal:

My mind is turning into a reservoir of toxic and radioactive material - a constant threat to my peace and hope.

My thoughts are repetitive and disturbing at night, anxiety and paranoia are my biggest trolls.

Trolls that I must face up every day along with feelings of inadequacy and shame and guilt.

When I'm going through this moments I remind myself that I've been through this before and that I'll make it through.

Each day I strive to maintain my sanity. I know I have lost it many times before, but I've always managed to regain it. I struggle to retain my joy and the sense of who am I.

I struggle keeping myself in the right path. Living in a maximum security prison, as a reformed "prisoner", a rehabilitated person, is like old school reckoning - There's no GPS or radar guiding you through this jungle, this emotional and psychological jungle.

Deep, thick terrain where you make your footing in it, encountering all types of challenges: guilt, shame, pain, sorrow, anger, anxiety, your patience is constantly putting to the test. The toxicity of some, puts you out of character but you always managed to handle things in the best way.

What is worst: is that I keep thinking I deserve this continuing punishment.

I do not deny the fact that I must pay for my crime. But how long is enough?

But my redeemed soul doesn't want to take it anymore.

All I seek from this dire strait is peace of mind and love, compassion and redemption.

I've been in a battle against who I was, and the person I want to be, and the kind of the person, prison expects from you. But this battle is needed to form the person I was meant to be.

Right now I am in the process of elevating my mind, elevating my self-esteem and dignity. Achieving the goals I have set in my mind.

I like to think that it's a never-ending battle against my own trolls, lurking in the shadows of confinement.

The conditions of isolation in confinement, inhibits your capacity to thrive and to achieve your goals. It degrades your soul gradually.

It deprives you from sensory stimulus. Turning you into an unnatural state of mind. Not the person you are.